

3. Using Data

The written program evaluation plan reflects a discriminating use of data. Data markers include child-based data, classroom-based data, staff surveys and markers of family well-being. GSRP utilizes information from screenings, ongoing observations, program quality evaluations, and insight from staff and parents to determine if the systems in place are working, whether there is an efficient use of resources and how the program can best respond to the needs of enrolled children. The focus of a systematic approach to local data collection and data use is to provide continuous improvement feedback to staff and enrolled families.

Parents partner in child-development goals as active decision-makers. Parents discuss data with their children's teachers and understand what the data means for their children, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) utilizes the *Program Quality Assessment*® (PQA) throughout the year to assess local classroom structure, processes, and outcomes to document program effectiveness; and to provide information for program improvement and accountability. A data analysis team is led by the ECS and includes parents, the program supervisor, representation from teaching teams, and other specialists or stakeholders, as appropriate. A systematic approach brings the team together three times each program year.

When the data analysis process is complete at the local level, the ECC convenes the ECS team to aggregate and analyze the overall results for the year. The ECC uses aggregated child outcome and program quality data to share success in meeting goals and to address needs that are revealed by data disaggregated by sub-groups, e.g. English Language Learners, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The ECC determines if data collected are being used in ways that drive continuous improvement efforts. The ECC evaluates the degree to which data are being used to differentiate supports to subrecipients, staff and children. Data patterns may reveal a need for ISD-wide goals for improvement and professional development.

Subrecipients are required to develop a local evaluation component, including a follow-up study through second grade. Local longitudinal data collection facilitates communication between preschool and early elementary grades. Data collected provide information regarding the progress of children enrolled in GSRP through subsequent grades, referral to special services such as Special Education and Title I, school attendance, school performance, retention, and parent involvement. Reflection on longitudinal data provides preschool program staff with insight into the conditions of successful transition from preschool to subsequent grades and should be coupled with other program data to further program quality.

Local longitudinal efforts are enhanced by participation in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS). The MSDS is the state education database and includes discrete information about individual children such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and program participation. Each GSRP-enrolled child must be documented in the MSDS.

Adapted from the Program Evaluation section of the *GSRP Implementation Manual*.